

## *The President's Daily Brief*

*13 May 1972*

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## THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

13 May 1972

## PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Vietnam.

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## SOVIET UNION - VIETNAM

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Soviet politburo member Shelepin has postponed his visit to Norway, scheduled for 15-20 May, because of "unforeseen circumstances." Kremlin leaders may have decided that increasingly tough decisions may be necessary and that all politburo members should remain available for consultation. In the past, however, Shelepin himself has given a high priority to being present in Moscow during times of crisis, and he may have been instrumental in putting off his own trip.

The new US moves against North Vietnam have not caused any interruption in the travel of other Soviet leaders.

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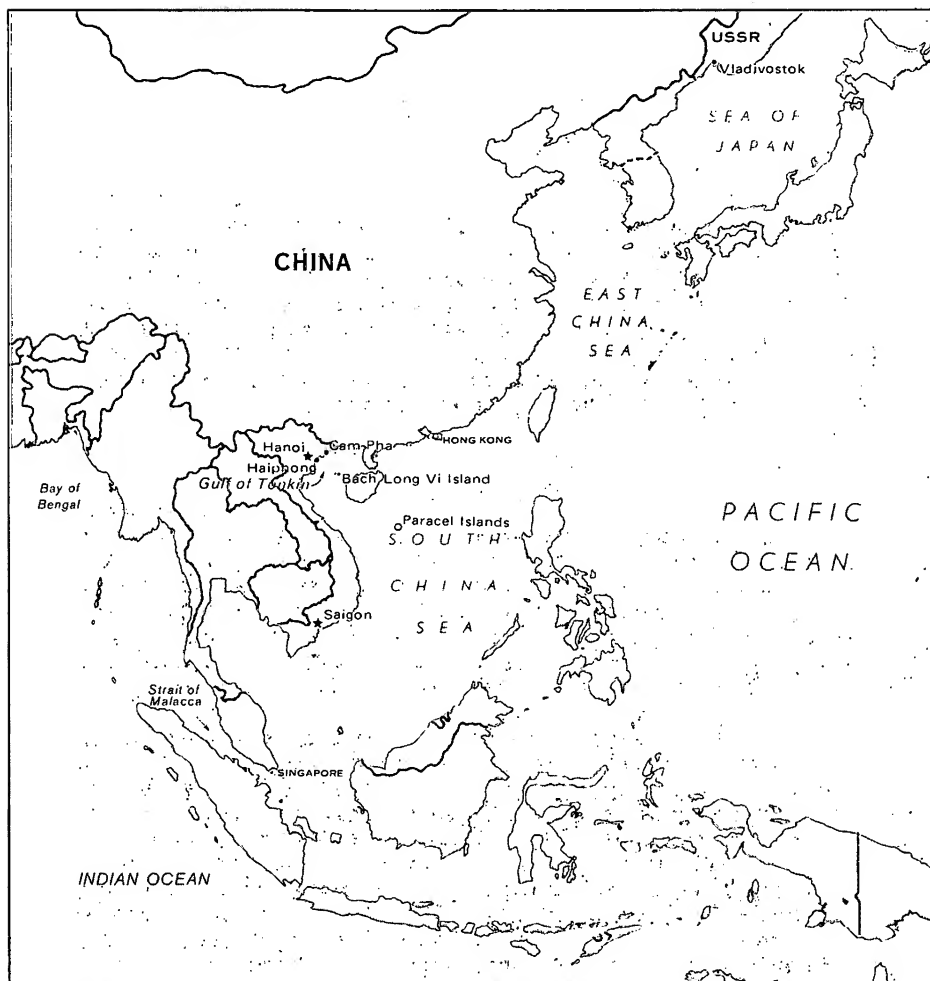
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Yesterday, the USSR formally protested the damage to two Soviet ships--the Pevek and the Grisha Akopyan--and the injuries to Soviet crewmen resulting from recent US bombing raids. The language of the note, however, was relatively restrained and did not refer to the Soviet crewman who died. The Soviets indicated that the Grisha Akopyan had been put out of action, and they reserved the right to demand compensation for that and for other damage. The note was delivered to Ambassador Beam by First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov and has not yet been publicized.

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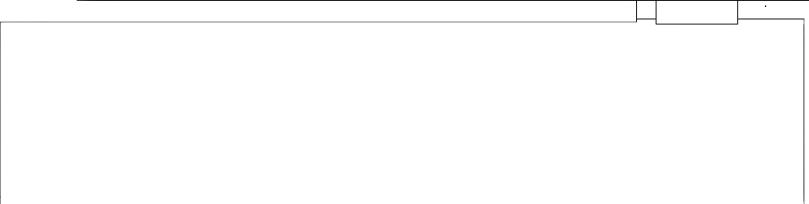
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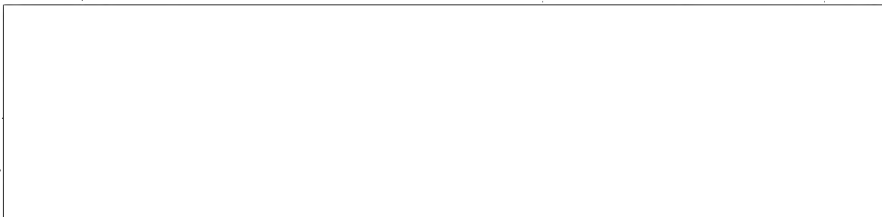
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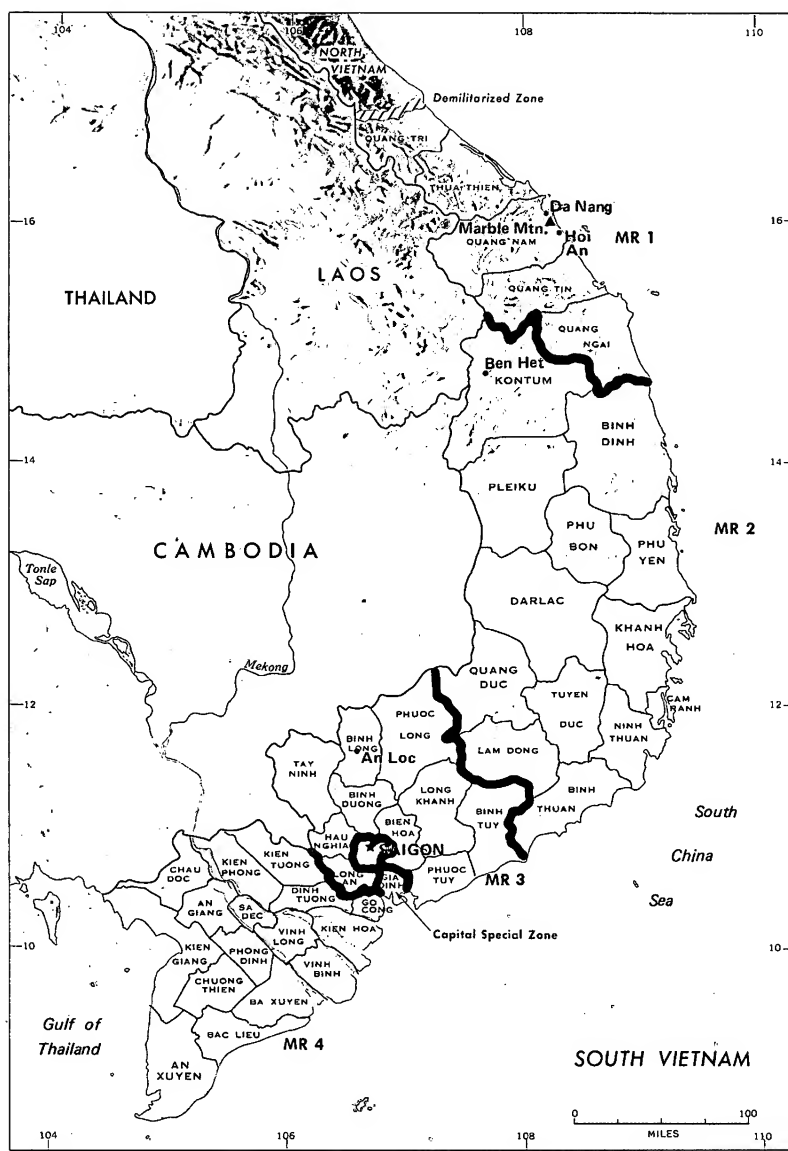


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Four Soviet minesweepers were sighted late yesterday heading south into the Sea of Japan through the La Perouse Strait north of Hokkaido. The ships probably deployed from the Soviet naval base at Petropavlovsk and should join other Soviet naval ships in the Vladivostok area in the next few days. If they continue moving south, it would take ten days to two weeks for them to reach the Indochina area.

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## VIETNAM

Communist forces are increasing pressure on government positions in several areas of South Vietnam, with the heaviest action at An Loc. Fresh artillery and ground assaults yesterday were launched against the town, and enemy tanks breached government defenses in the western and northern sectors. Heavy rains, which prevented the full use of aircraft in defense of An Loc, ended early this morning and government forces have thus far contained the enemy drive with the aid of tactical aircraft.

In northern South Vietnam, intercepts indicate that the Communists have scheduled a series of attacks for tomorrow in Quang Nam Province. Specific targets include the provincial headquarters at Hoi An as well as nearby ships and docking facilities. Other targets are the airfields at Da Nang and Marble Mountain.

In the central highlands, South Vietnamese Rangers continue to hold Ben Het following a Communist tank-supported attack. Ranger forces have cleared much of the area around the camp.

In the Mekong Delta, Communist action was directed mostly against rural outposts, but the enemy may soon begin attacking more important targets.

[redacted] the Communists have moved an estimated 1,000 troops across the border from southeastern Cambodia into Kien Giang Province. These forces may be from the enemy's Phuoc Long Front, which is believed to have at least three infantry regiments in this area.

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President Thieu's bid for emergency decree powers from the National Assembly apparently faces a difficult future. An Quang Buddhist-dominated opposition blocs in both houses of the assembly have publicly denounced the measure, charging that it was a move toward dictatorship.

*Although Thieu seems likely to get eventual legislative approval, the assembly's opposition is a serious blow to his effort to create the appearance of national unity.*

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The North Vietnamese claimed on 10 May that they had begun minesweeping operations in Haiphong harbor. In earlier years they were able to remove mines from inland waterways, but they are believed to have only a marginal capability at best to sweep mines from the more open waters of Haiphong harbor.

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## USSR

Oleg Grinevsky, a senior Soviet delegate at SALT, has made an unusually strong affirmation of Soviet interest in mutual and balanced force reductions. In a conversation with Raymond Garthoff on 10 May, Grinevsky compared the future importance of MBFR over the next few years with that of SALT. He suggested that MBFR talks might begin in mid-November and should be restricted to those countries in Europe whose territory or forces are involved--the two Germanies, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, and Belgium, besides the US and USSR, the UK, and possibly France. Grinevsky did not discuss the relationship between MBFR and a conference on European security, but his mention of a mid-November starting date--after the US elections--could be an effort to accommodate the US.

*Grinevsky is one of two principal disarmament officers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since MBFR is a Western initiative about which the Soviets have been lukewarm, his remarks are particularly conciliatory.*

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## KOREA

South Korean CIA Director Yi Hu-rak's trip to North Korea from 2 to 5 May was a success. Both sides used the opportunity to gauge the mettle of the other and to develop a framework for future discussion of bilateral issues. Yi told Ambassador Habib this week that the North Koreans seemed genuinely interested in a dialogue that would lead to a lessening of tension on the peninsula.

Yi gained this impression from meetings with Premier Kim Il-song, his brother Kim Yong-chu, and other North Korean leaders. Both sides called for broadened political, social, and economic contacts as steps toward greater mutual understanding and eventual reunification. Yi told Habib, however, that he believed this process would take an extremely long time and noted that the North Koreans were not willing to imply by agreeing to discussions that in the interim they accept the concept of two Koreas. Rather, the North wishes to talk only in the context of future reunification.

The high points of Yi's stay were two meetings with Premier Kim Il-song. Yi was impressed with the North Korean leader, describing him as highly intelligent, with views free of the jargon that characterized his subordinates. According to Yi, Kim seemed genuinely interested in learning about conditions in South Korea, ROK military intentions toward the North, Seoul's attitude toward the presence of US troops in the South, and Japanese intentions toward the peninsula. Although his interest was genuine, Kim's view of the world, as expressed to Yi, does not carry much beyond the confines of Pyongyang's propaganda. Kim seemed to think, for example, that the Japanese harbor plans to occupy South Korea again, and lightly brushed aside past North Korean hostile acts against the South--such as the attack on President Pak's palace in January 1969 or the capture of the USS Pueblo--as either accidental or beyond his control.

Yi stated that no important conclusions were reached in the meetings nor were any problems settled. Both sides agreed, however, to keep the talks secret and to continue them at a high level. It was established that North Korean Second Vice Premier Pak Song-chol would travel to Seoul for the next stage in the dialogue, but the timing of his visit was not set. Yi also secured an agreement for the establishment of a "hot line" between Seoul

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and Pyongyang and obtained assurances from Kim Il-song that the North will permit the Red Cross talks on family reunification to move ahead.

*Yi avoided characterizing President Pak's reaction to his trip, but suggested that other members of the South Korean leadership who were informed remain essentially cautious.*

*Pyongyang's choice of Pak Song-chol--an experienced and well-traveled negotiator with a good grasp of foreign affairs--to lead its side implies that the North Koreans will pursue their side of the dialogue without recourse to the polemics that have characterized the Red Cross talks.*

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USSR-CUBA

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## CHILE

President Allende yesterday submitted to Congress a proposed constitutional amendment nationalizing ITT's telephone company assets in Chile. The amendment, like the one passed last year to nationalize US copper interests, provides for subtracting "unlawful profits" and other penalties from the value of company assets in determining any compensation to be paid to the company. Allende explained to Ambassador Davis on Thursday that it had been determined that the simple nationalization legislation he had intended to submit a week ago would not do and that a constitutional amendment was required.

*Although Allende was vague in his conversation with Davis, the implication is clear that ITT will now receive little if any compensation. It is evident that Allende has retreated from the assurances he gave Ambassador Davis and Under Secretary Irwin recently that ITT would receive "reasonable" compensation.*

*The apparent explanation for Allende's switch is pressure from extremists within his coalition who have been pushing for more rapid socialization and advocating confrontation with the US. These extremists have been critical of Allende's caution vis-a-vis Washington.*

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UK-EGYPT

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*The Jaguar is a Mach 1.7 aircraft designed primarily for ground attack and tactical strikes. This role in the Egyptian Air Force is now filled by the SU-7, which carries about half the bomb load.*

British policy permits sales of limited amounts of military equipment to Middle Eastern countries if, in London's judgment, the sales do not upset the military balance in the area. Earlier this year the UK approved the sale of three small submarines to Israel.

*The British probably view the sale--which would be the first to a foreign country--as desirable, even though they realize Cairo itself cannot pay for many years. It would serve as a valuable enhancement of the British image in the Arab world.*

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